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Linda McCulloch
Superintendent

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 18, 2007

High School Student Meth Use Down 66%

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Linda McCulloch today released 2007 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey results showing a 66% decrease in the use of methamphetamines among high school students since 1999. Attorney General Mike McGrath and Montana Meth Project Chairman Mike Gullede also released additional new Montana Meth Project state and national survey results.

"I'm delighted to share this rather dramatic new information on Montana's fight against the use of methamphetamines. The 2007 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Study (YRBS) reports that meth use among high school students has decreased by 66% since 1999," announces State Superintendent Linda McCulloch. "In 1999, 13.5% of Montana high school students reported using meth one or more times in their lives. The 2007 YRBS reports this has now dropped to 4.6%. This is a decrease of 66% of reported meth use among high school students."

"The 2007 Montana YRBS is the first time the Office of Public Instruction has conducted its biennial survey since the Montana Meth Project launched its campaign in September of 2005. The survey results indicate that the Meth Project campaign has played a very significant role in reducing meth use among Montana high school students," explains Superintendent Linda McCulloch. "Prior to the Meth Project campaign the rate of high school student meth use had been decreasing on an average of 15% decreasing every two years. After just 18 months of exposure to the Meth Project campaign, the rate of high school student meth use decreased by 45%, more than three times the prior rate."

"Decreasing substance abuse rates among target groups below 10% is very difficult. It is particularly impressive that the rate of meth use among this most difficult target group dropped from 8.3% in 2005 to 4.6% in 2007. This is additional evidence as to the power and effectiveness of the Meth Project campaign," notes Superintendent McCulloch.

"It is the mission of the Office of Public Instruction to improve teaching and learning through communication, collaboration, advocacy, and accountability to those we serve."

"The message is getting out there...using meth is beyond uncool. The reported use among 9th and 10th grade students is down to 3.5%. We are well on the road to getting rid of meth in every community in Montana," points out Superintendent McCulloch.

Since 1991, the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have cooperatively administered the biennial Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) with Montana schools. All Montana public schools students in grades 9 through 12 were eligible for the High School YRBS. A random sample of 4,030 students from 47 schools participated in the anonymous, 90-item survey conducted February 26-28, 2007. Over 10,000 additional Montana high school students not selected for the random sample voluntarily participated in the 2007 YRBS.

"The YRBS results dramatically demonstrate the progress we as Montanans have made in the war against meth. It shows what Montana communities can accomplish when there are active partnerships among the public and private efforts. I want to particularly thank Attorney General Mike McGrath, Montana Meth Project Chair Mike Gullede and our friends holding a simultaneous news conference in Washington, D.C., Meth Project Founder and Vice Chair Tom Siebel, US Senator Max Baucus, US Senator Jon Tester, US Representative Denny Rehberg, and director of the Centers for Disease Control, Dr. Julie Gerberding for their leadership on this important public health issue," concludes State Superintendent Linda McCulloch.

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